Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT DUCHESNE SCHOOL DISTRICT April 17, 2006

The attached report contains the results of the first two phases (Self-Assessment Process and On-Site Validation Visit) of the Utah Special Education Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS). This Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process is conducted by the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) Special Education Services (SES), as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B. The process is designed to focus resources on improving results for students with disabilities through enhanced partnerships between district programs, USOE-SES, the Utah Personnel Development Center, parents, and advocates.

The first phase of this process included the completion of the Self-Assessment and the development of a Program Improvement Plan. The second phase, On-Site Validation, conducted in Duchesne School District on December 8-9, 2005, included student record review, interviews with district and school administrators, related service professionals, teachers, parents, and students. Parent surveys were also mailed to a small sample of district parents. Information from these data sources was shared in an exit meeting attended by staff from Duchesne School District and members of the Steering Committee.

This report contains a more complete description of the process utilized to collect data and to determine strengths, areas out of compliance with the requirements of IDEA, and recommendations for improvement in each of the core IDEA areas.

Areas of Strength

The validation team found the following:

General Supervision

- IEP forms used by Duchesne School District are in compliance and updated with changes as needed.
- Duchesne School District has in place approved policies and procedures, consistent with USBE Special Education Rules.
- Child Find activities with DCSD provide the assurance that all students with disabilities residing within the school district are located, evaluated, identified, and provided a free appropriate public education (FAPE).
- The district has adequate evaluation instruments and qualified personnel to administer these evaluations.
- DCSD has safeguards in place to protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information during its collection, storage, disclosure, and destruction.
- LRBI Committee in place which monitors the use of Level 3 and 4 interventions by IEP teams, when necessary.
- Duchesne School District has a system to determine personnel development and training needed to support improved educational outcomes for students with disabilities.
- IEP team members understand Procedural Safeguards in special education.
- Referral forms present in special education files.
- District administration awareness of school needs and strengths in special education.
- DCSD administration taking on special education assessment duties allows teachers additional classroom time with students.
- Evidence of confidentiality was found through records kept in locked file cabinets and up to date records of access.
- Personnel development opportunities are based upon student needs determined from data such as U-PASS.
- General education teachers expressed support for special education services and encouraged the placement of students with disabilities within their classrooms.
- Systematic preschool child find system is in place throughout Duchesne School District.

Parent Involvement

- Duchesne School District uses USOE approved Procedural Safeguards, which are given to parents at the times required by IDEA and state rules.
- Parents of students with disabilities are given, before their child's 17th birthday, documentation that the student and the parent have been informed of the rights that will transfer to the student upon reaching the age of majority.
- Parents and families receive training in their rights and responsibilities with IDEA and the IEP process.
- Parents participate in stakeholder activities to improve results for students with disabilities.

- Special education files contain evidence of parent participation through Notice of Meetings, signatures on consent forms, and signatures on IEPs.
- The parent focus group was a sincere sharing of positive experiences and concerns. Twelve parents attended.
- Parents feel that the school district encourages their involvement in their student's education.
- Parents report that school special education staff encourage them as active participants as meetings.
- Parents reported feeling comfortable taking problems to the school and district level, if necessary, to get them resolved.

Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

- Evaluation teams, including parents, review existing eligibility data.
- The percentage of students with disabilities ages 3-21 served at each point in the continuum of placements is comparable to state data.
- Duchesne School District provides information regarding where an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) can be obtained.
- Initial evaluations are completed within 60 day timelines, as required by IDEA 2004.
- Current Eligibility Determinations were found in each reviewed file.
- Special factors generally addressed correctly on IEPs.
- Evaluation materials and results were included in special education files, which also included classroombased assessment results.
- Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP) were being utilized consistently in some school settings.

Transitions

- Rate of graduation for Duchesne School District's students with disabilities is higher than students with disabilities nationally.
- Part C invited to initial IEP meeting, when appropriate.
- Students invited to and participating in IEP meetings, as shown by Notice of Meetings and student signatures on IEPs.
- Student input is considered and documented when developing the transition plan.
- Evidence of coordination with community agencies as reported by teachers and parents.

Disproportionality

• Duchesne School District reported 0 suspension/expulsions for longer than 10 days during the 2004-2005 school year.

Areas of Systemic Noncompliance*

- ✓ Qualified Personnel Four teachers on Letters of authorization (LOA).
- ✓ Caseload Limits Some teachers over caseload limits.
- ✓ Pre-Referral Interventions form did not document at least 2 classroom interventions implemented before referral. Pre-Referral Interventions form did not document at least 2 classroom interventions failed, with supporting data.
- ✓ Copies to parents of Review of Existing Evaluation Data form, Evaluation Summary Reports, Eligibility Determination, and Evalution Consent form not documented due to missing form or no documentation that copy was given.
- ✓ Notice of Meeting for IEP, placement, and Eligibility meetings missing or incomplete in 31% of applicable reviewed files.
- ✓ Prior Written Notice of eligibility and evaluation missing in 38% of applicable reviewed files.
- ✓ Evaluation Procedures not followed: review of existing evaluation form was missing; students were not assessed in all areas related to suspected disability and sufficiently comprehensive to identify needs; Evaluation Summary Report was missing or did not include data in 38% of applicable reviewed files; variety of assessment tools and strategies were not used to gather relevant functional information in determining eligibility.
- ✓ Evaluation Procedures for SLD classification did not include: the use of an observation of the student's academic performance in the regular classroom setting; the preparation of an evaluation summary report that includes the relevant behavior noted during the observation; the preparation of an evaluation summary report that includes the description of the instructional environment in which the observation took place; a confirmation of each identified deficit by at least 2 measures.

- ✓ Evaluation Procedures for DD classification did not include documentation that the student had a significant delay.
- ✓ IEP PLAAFP statements did not include how the disability affects involvement/progress in the general curriculum, did not include baseline data, and did not document goals, services, and amount of time needed if ESY was selected.
- ▼ Timelines for IEP and reevaluation review/revision exceeded.
- ✓ Transition plan courses of study did not address specific student needs or were missing.

^{*}These areas represent items where the visiting team could not locate appropriate documentation of requirements of IDEA 2004 and Utah State Special Education Rules in student records or other data sources.